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A

POLITICAL VIEW

OF THE

ROMAN CATHOLIC QUESTION;

ESPECIALLY REGARDING THE

SUPREMACY USURPED BY THE CHURCH OF ROME

OVER

OTHER CHRISTIAN CHURCHES,

AND STILL CLAIMED BY THAT CHURCH AS DUE TO IT BY

DIVINE RIGHT,

AND STILL PRACTICALLY EXERCISED BY THAT CHURCH IN GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND, IN DEFIANCE OF THE LAWS MADE FOR ITS EXCLUSION;

A SUPREMACY,

INCOMPATIBLE WITH IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES OF THE BRITISH INSTITUTIONS;

INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE FREEDOM OF THE SUBJECTS OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT OF EVERY RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION;

AND

INCONSISTENT WITH THE INDEPENDENCE WHICH OUGHT TO BE MAINTAINED BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT IN THE DISCHARGE OF ALL ITS FUNCTIONS.

BY LORD REDESDALE.

LONDON:
J. HATCHARD AND SON, 187, PICCADILLY.
1829.

LONDON:
IBOTSON AND PALMER, PRINTERS, SAVOY STREET, STRAND.

A

POLITICAL VIEW,

&c.

The public mind is at this time vehemently agitated by the subject of the following remarks, called "The Roman Catholic Question:" and it is important to the peace of the country, at this time, and to its future peace and good government, that, whatever may be the decision of that question, the effects of that decision on the political state of the country should be fully understood; and for that purpose that its political effects should be considered distinctly from and independent of the effects which the determination of the question (in conformity or contrary to the views of any of the contending parties) may have upon the religion of the country, considered simply as derived from purely religious opinions, adopted by individuals, or by bodies of men.

It is therefore proposed, in the following pages, to consider *only* the effects which the concession to the Roman Catholics of all their claims may have on the political institutions of the British government.

The question, called the Roman Catholic Question, has been long agitated; and it has recently produced great disturbance in England, some disturbance in Scotland, and great disturbance in Ireland; where, in past times, the influence of the Roman Catholic religion, and the opposition made to its claims, have, more than once, brought on the country the horrors of disastrous civil wars.

At this moment a renewal of civil war in Ireland is threatened; and the ministers of the Crown have professed themselves alarmed by that threat, and have therefore advised His Majesty to recommend a general view of the subject to the consideration of his parliament. They profess themselves to be acting under the influence of fear: an influence not favourable to the use of sound judgment, and therefore an influence not likely to produce a wise result.

The object of His Majesty, as declared in the Speech delivered in his name to his parliament, is, to give peace to his subjects, and to improve the condition of Ireland; a country which has certainly of late been in a state of disturbance tending to impede improvement, and to injure that social intercourse, most important to the happiness, and

consequently to the improvement, of the country. There the conflict of religious opinions has unquestionably had most injurious effects; and the advocates for what is called Catholic emancipation, represent the concession to the Roman Catholics of *all their demands,* as the only mean of restoring peace and prosperity to that country. At the same time they assert, that the concession of those demands is perfectly consistent with, indeed is in conformity to, the principles of the British constitution; and that, instead of injuring, it would be advantageous to all those who, dissenting from the Roman church, are apprehensive of oppression by its ascendancy; and fear that such concession would be, finally, destructive of that liberty which they now enjoy. The opposers of concession therefore conceive themselves to be the advocates of freedom, and think that the advocates of Catholic emancipation are the advocates of slavery; of the slavery of all.

The members of the established churches of England and Ireland, and of Scotland also, (though perhaps in a less degree,) have been alarmed; and that alarm has been probably greater, in consequence of the mysterious language, and mysterious conduct, of His Majesty's ministers; the apparently sudden change in the opinions of those ministers; and the want of that discreet preparation, by previously sounding the public mind on the subject, which marked the proceedings of former ministers in the relief which they thought it expedient to give

to the Roman Catholics. Hence has arisen a strong apprehension that measures may be proposed, injurious, instead of beneficial, to the united kingdom; measures tending to increase, rather than to diminish, contention.

In the Speech delivered in His Majesty's name, the two houses of parliament have been desired to consider, whether disabilities, imposed by existing laws on His Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects, can be removed consistently with the full and permanent security of our establishments in church and state, with the maintenance of the reformed religion established by law, and of the rights and privileges of the bishops and clergy of the realm, and of the churches committed to their charge; His Majesty graciously adding, "that these were institutions which must ever be held sacred in this Protestant kingdom, and which it was the duty and determination of His Majesty to preserve inviolate."

It is somewhat remarkable that the supreme authority of the state over all its subjects, the most important and essential part of the British institutions, and that on which all the rest must depend, seems, on this occasion, to have escaped the attention of His Majesty's ministers; though that authority is deeply involved in the subject which His Majesty proposed to submit to the consideration of his parliament, the whole power, legislative and executive, of the British government, depending

on the maintenance of that supreme authority: by which alone His Majesty's subjects can be completely united in the protection and defence of their government, of that freedom which they enjoy under its institutions, and of the independence of their country from all foreign dominion. Where the government of a country is not in all things supreme; where (to use the language of a play) the sovereign power has a viceroy over it; there can be no good government.

In considering, politically, the subject now directly brought into the view of all His Majesty's subjects, and to which their attention has been thus distinctly called, with a strong intimation of the difficulties which had occurred to His Majesty's mind regarding great public establishments under his protection, it may be useful to consider what have been, at other times, the claims of His Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects with respect to relief from the disabilities to which His Majesty's speech has referred; what have since been, and what are now, their claims; what is the extent of those claims, and what the effects which may be produced by yielding to those claims, in the whole or in part, and with or without new regulations or restrictions. Especially, it will be important to consider, what is the nature of the supreme power over other Christian churches claimed by the church of Rome, and at this time exercised, both in Great Britain and Ireland, in defiance of the laws

made for its exclusion; and what means can be adopted, if any can be found, to prevent the injurious effects of that supremacy, at this moment severely felt in Ireland, and operating in Great Britain also in no small degree, in derogation of the supreme authority of the government.

The open and avowed intrusion of the authority of the church of Rome exercised over His Majesty's subjects within his domnions, in defiance of the existing laws for its exclusion, demonstrates that no reliance can be placed on the mere enactment of a prohibitory law, to prevent the intrusion of a power which operates by the force of religious opinion: a force which it has been ever found, in all countries, difficult, if not impossible, to resist by any merely prohibitory law. The willing subjects of such a power cannot be restrained from submission to it, as long as their submission is merely *submission*, and does not lead them, *by action*, to subvert the law.

Subversion of the political institutions of a country may be effected in four ways; first, by open force; secondly, by changing the legislative constitution of the country, and giving it a new form—an operation generally requiring the use of some force; thirdly, without changing the form of the constitution, by compelling the constitutional legislative power to abolish, through fear, existing institutions; and fourthly, by procuring the admission of institutions hostile to the institutions complained

of, into the legislative and executive government of the country; and thus enabling those who are hostile to existing institutions, by the possession of political power, to repeal those institutions to which they are hostile, and to establish a different system.

The disabilities referred to in His Majesty's speech, are disabilities affecting the exercise of political power by those persons who profess the Roman Catholic religion; who are, as the law now stands, excluded from seats in the legislature, and from many important offices of the state. Roman Catholics are at present, therefore, except by the use of superior force, or by intimidation produced by the threat of force, in a considerable degree disabled from changing the established religion of the country, from giving to the church of Rome by law that supremacy which it claims, and in a degree assumes contrary to law, and by giving to its ministers the rights, and privileges, and revenues of the clergy of the realm, as now established, together with the churches committed to their charge; and thus bringing all his Majesty's subjects in the united kingdom under the dominion of the church of Rome: that church claiming, by divine authority, supreme dominion over all Christian churches, and a right to controul all temporal authority in whatever that church may declare to be of spiritual cognizance.

If the disabilities, of which the Roman Catholics complain, should be removed, the performance

of the duty which his Majesty conceives to have been imposed upon him, a duty which he has declared to be in him a sacred duty, which he is anxious strictly to perform, will depend on the extent of political power which the Roman Catholic church may obtain within his dominions; by its exertions, or by union with others, who may, with different views, be hostile, or, (seduced by the love of power or gain,) be indifferent, to those institutions which His Majesty considers as ever to be held sacred, and to be preserved inviolate.

The Roman Catholics in England and Ireland have been relieved from various disabilities and restrictions which did affect their persons, their property, and their religion; the laws operating such relief, still reserving, as the only guard against the usurping spirit of the sovereign of the Roman Catholic mind, the church of Rome, certain disabilities in the exercise of political power; a reserservation then deemed necessary for the preservation of the rights and liberties of such of His Majesty's subjects as did not profess the Roman Catholic religion; necessary for the preservation of the established churches, and of the general freedom from the uncontrolled dominion of the church of Rome; a dominion to which Roman Catholics willingly submit, but to which those who are not Roman Catholics are not only unwilling to submit, but dread the tyranny which has marked the sway

of that dominion, whenever it has had uncontrouled power; a tyranny, humbling in the dust all temporal power opposed to it.

The example of unfortunate Spain is at this moment before their eyes, and they dread a similar fate; a dread not a little increased by the recent introduction into Great Britain and Ireland of splendid establishments of the order of Jesuits, and of other religious orders, supported at a great expence, by contributions not very different from the Catholic rent; a tax recently established, and rigidly extorted from the poorest of the people in Ireland, by the influence of their priests. The sovereign power of the church of Rome imposed that tax, and the same sovereign power has compelled its collection, and presides over its application. Thus that sovereign power has assumed, in Ireland, one of the most important powers of a temporal government—the power of taxation; and has enforced the payment of the tax by the influence of the Roman Catholic religion.

To judge correctly of the objects which the Roman Catholics of Great Britain and Ireland, and particularly the Roman Catholics of Ireland, have in view, it may be important to notice in what manner they have at different times sought relief from the disability of which they complain, and in what language they have expressed their views on the subject.

In their petitions to Parliament, they have for-

merly stated, that they desired "an equal participation, upon equal terms with their fellow-subjects, of the full benefits of the British laws and constitution."

There was a gross and manifest fallacy in their thus pretending to claim the full benefits of the British laws and constitution, at the same time that they professed themselves to be desirous of remaining under subjection to a power, the existence of which, within the British islands, was inconsistent with the most important principles of the British constitution; a power claiming superiority over the British constitution and government, and the British laws, made to preserve the independence of that government; a power claiming a right to control the British government in the exercise of its authority, in any matter which that power might think fit to assume as within its own peculiar prerogative. Freedom from the tyranny of that power was one of the great benefits which their fellow-subjects derived from the British laws and constitution; and it was ridiculous for the Roman Cotholics, professing themselves the willing slaves of that power, to pretend a desire to participate in the full benefit of those laws and of that constitution, upon equal terms with their fellow-subjects.

Their petitions were therefore objected to, as manifestly founded on false pretences. If they had really meant to enjoy "an equal participation on equal terms with their fellow-subjects, of the full

benefits of the British laws and constitution," they would have prayed that those laws might be enforced in their favour, by which the rest of His Majesty's subjects sought protection from that tyranny, to which they had, in violation of those laws, submitted. But they needed not to call for such protection; if they would have obeyed those laws, they would have had by those laws that protection which those laws would have afforded to them.

This gross fallacy in their former petitions having been exposed, they have now changed their tone, and have boldly claimed a right to be the subjects of the church of Rome, acknowledging the full sovereignty of its power, and its right to exercise that sovereignty, not only over themselves, but over all His Majesty's subjects of every religious persuasion, whom they represent as rebels against the divine authority of that power. At at the same time, they have claimed a right to all the powers which are allowed to such of His Majesty's subjects as have refused to submit to the church of Rome, and have asserted their freedom from the tyranny of that church, claiming the benefit of those laws, and that constitution, by which that freedom was protected and preserved.

The Roman Catholics, therefore, now openly claim, that the independence of the United Kingdom should be sacrificed to their religious opinions; that the British constitution should be changed to suit their opinions; that instead of one sovereign

legislative power, and one sovereign executive power under the control of the legislative power, as the British constitution now stands, there should be two sovereign legislative powers; one, the King Lords and Commons, in Parliament assembled; and the other, the church of Rome, acting in its foreign conclave; the latter power being superior to the former in the exercise of authority over all who may profess the Roman Catholic religion. In like manner they assert, that there ought to be two sovereign executive powers; one being the King of the United kingdom, and the authorities placed by the law of the land under him, bound to exercise authority according to the laws of the land, and only according to those laws; the other executive power being the church of Rome, not with concurrent, but with superior and sole power over all His Majesty's subjects who should profess the Roman Catholic religion, and thus withdraw themselves from that sole allegiance which at present, according to the laws, they ought to owe to His Majesty, as the sole head of the British government, charged with the execution of all the laws of the country.

They thus declare their hostility to important parts of the British constitution, to the independent sovereignty of its constitutional, legislative, and executive powers; and they assume a right to constitute an empire of the Roman church within the British empire; to lay the independence of the

British government, as far as they are subjects of that government, at the feet of the church of Rome: thus disclaiming for themselves the absolute freedom of the British government. At the same time, for themselves, they claim as a right, to be admitted to the offices of guardians and administrators of the institution of that government, the independence of which they avow they are bound by the force of their religious opinions, as far as may be in their power, to destroy; and to use for that purpose, the power which they seek to obtain. Would it not be insanity in those who are now free, to grant to the willing slaves of the church of Rome that power which would enable them to bring the free under the same slavery; those slaves at the same time avowing, that their religion compels them to bring all the world under subjection to the church of Rome, if they could obtain power sufficient for that purpose.

Notwithstanding the apparent extravagance of this claim, the Roman Catholics are supported in it by persons who *pretend to be the friends of freedom,* and to be anxious for the preservation of the principles of the British constitution. With happy inconsistency, those persons pretend to admire the principles of the British constitution, and at the same time represent submission by the Roman Catholics to the free principles of that constitution, as slavery, and the subversion of those principles as necessary to free the Roman Catholics of the United Kingdom from slavery; and they have therefore named the

measures which they have proposed for that purpose, "CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION."

Those who advocate the measures by which they propose to effect what they have called Catholic Emancipation, generally endeavour to avoid the true question between them and the advocates for Protestant freedom, and for the constitutional freedom of all the people of the British empire; which is, Whether principles on which British freedom now rests, as vindicated by the Revolution of 1688, shall be broken by the admission of the influence of a foreign power in the administration of the government of the country, legislative and executive; or shall remain entire, by the exclusion of that influence.

The advocates of Catholic emancipation dare not to propose directly, that that foreign power shall be admitted to influence the administration of the government of the country in the person of the prince on the throne; they dare not to propose, (in direct contradiction to the Act of Settlement,) that a Roman Catholic king shall be the sovereign head of the United Kingdom; but they do propose, that the king, remaining Protestant, may be surrounded and guided in his government, and in his court, by Roman Catholic ministers and Roman Catholic officers, anxious to keep from him all Protestant counsel, all Protestant information; that he should be led by Roman Catholic influence, even to place the education of an infant heir apparent, heir presumptive,

or expectant heir to the throne, under the care of a Roman Catholic governor or tutor; surrounding that infant also with Roman Catholic officers, leading his tender mind to familiarity with, and at length to reverence for, Roman Catholic superstition; and finally, to render their work effectual, the emancipators propose, that the two Houses of Parliament should be open to Roman Catholic members, who might become, (under the influence of Roman Catholic ministers of the crown, of Roman Catholic peers and commoners, of the Roman Catholic priesthood in Great Britain and Ireland, of the order of Jesuits and other religious orders, and of foreign aid,) the ruling power, if not the numerical majority, in those Houses. What then could save the Protestants of Great Britain and Ireland from destruction, but their own bodily powers, *in the contest of a bloody civil war?*

To assist the Roman Catholics in obtaining, under the name of emancipation, absolute dominion, their advocates, in that warmth of party zeal which often leads to gross indiscretion, join with the Roman priesthood in attempting to degrade the Protestant religion; calling it (with the Roman priesthood) a novelty. They have dared to assert, even in Parliament, that the Protestant religion of Great Britain and Ireland is "a novelty;" "that it drew its source from the Roman Catholic church; that from that church it sprung, and received the means of its growth, maturity, and strength."

They deny, therefore, the principle on which Protestantism rests; the *protest* of its adherents against the *corruptions* of the Roman church; their separation from that church because of its corruptions, and their return to what they conceive to be the true religion of Christ, as preached by him and his apostles; as preached for centuries after his death, but shamefully corrupted for the ambitious and interested purposes of the priests of the church of Rome, falsely assuming a divine right to supremacy and sovereignty over all Christian churches, and over the religion of all who professed themselves to be Christians: a divine right to be religious tyrants.

The gross misrepresentation of the character of the reformed churches, adopted by advocates for Catholic emancipation, is of itself alarming; but those advocates go further. They have asserted, even in Parliament, "that so long as the Deity is worshiped in perfect sincerity, and in the spirit of humble desire to be enlightened, it was not for frail humanity to attempt to divide man from man, and produce disunion in the world, merely on account of *doctrinal or disciplinarian differences*." And they have used this language in support of the claims of the Roman Catholic church, which assumes to itself the right of determining, by absolute authority, "*all doctrinal and disciplinarian differences*," in its own way; condemning all who oppose its authority to death in this world, (where it has the power of inflicting

death by its Holy Inquisition,) and by eternal damnation in the world to come.

The influence of this tyrannical power, the advocates of Catholic emancipation urge the Protestants of the British island to admit in the administration of their political government, legislative, and executive.

If the argument is good for admission to equality in political power, is it not good also for its admission to equality in every power? How is it possible to maintain the right to two Protestant exclusively established churches? How is it possible to maintain the right to an exclusively Protestant throne? Indeed, are not the Protestant established churches, and the Protestant character of the throne, instruments of political power, and instruments of political power now exclusively in the hands of Protestants?

The arguments of the emancipators in favour of the measures which they propose, go equally to the destruction of both; the Protestant churches, and Protestant throne.

But what do the Roman Catholics themselves say on the subject of their church. Though they desire political power which may enable them importantly to interfere with the established Protestant churches, and with all Protestant institutions in church and state, they refuse to the government of their country (at least whilst it shall remain Protestant) any control whatsoever over their priest-

hood, for the purpose of preventing the appointment of persons most disaffected to the civil authority of tha government to situations of the highest power in their church; they adopt the language of Mr. Burke, asserting, in his letter to Lord Kenmare, "that no man, or set of men, are fit to administer the affairs, or regulate the interior economy, of a church to which they are enemies;" and they adopt this language at a moment when they are urging a *right* to be admitted members of the two Houses of Parliament, and to hold the first offices in the state; as fit men to administer the affairs and regulate the economy of the established churches of Great Britain and Ireland, (objects of the solemn compacts uniting England, Scotland, and Ireland in one kingdom,) being, as they openly avow, the deadly enemies of those churches, continually stigmatising those churches as "the unhallowed offspring of a pestilent heresy," which they profess, and openly profess, to be anxious "to sweep from the face of the earth."

They adopt also the language of Lord Donoughmore, who told them, "that a veto on the appointment of their bishops would introduce court intrigue into the sanctuary of their church:" they adopt the language of the same noble Lord, in asserting, "that they will not submit any situations in the Roman Catholic church of Ireland to the licence of the court;" meaning by the word "court," the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland—and thus refusing all control over their own church, whilst they desire, and

their advocates desire for them, that they, (the professors of the Roman Catholic religion, claiming for their church a right to govern the whole world in every thing which that church may think fit to assert belongs to religion,) should be admitted to be Cabinet ministers of the crown of this Protestant kingdom, the principal ministers of the state, and, as such, should not only have control over the appointment, but actually appoint, all the archbishops and bishops of the church of England, and enjoy all ecclesiastical patronage whatsoever in the possession, or under the influence of the crown, in England, Scotland, and Ireland.

They think it also fit, that Roman Catholics should make laws for, and in every way, as legislators, and as ministers of the crown, and possessing the influence of the crown, regulate, control, and direct a Protestant church; appointing every dignitary, and even many parish ministers of a Protestant church; but that it is utterly unfit that any Protestant should have the slightest degree of control over, or in any manner interfere with, the Roman Catholic church; (that church acting under foreign authority in Great Britain and Ireland;) not even by a simple negative to prevent the appointment to an office of high authority and great influence in their church, in England, Scotland, or Ireland, a person of the most mischievous character—a person known to be most strongly disaffected to the lay as well as ecclesiastical government of the kingdom.

Could any, but a person full of the divine authority of the Roman Catholic church, and considering every Protestant church as a pestilent heresy which it was his duty to sweep from the face of the earth, hold such language?—or a person blinded by party prejudice, which too often leads men into the grossest absurdities? Yet persons who professed to be Protestants, have held such language; and persons professing to be Protestants, persons professing to be the general advocates for civil and religious liberty, all the liberals of the day, hold such language.

The reasons given by Mr. Burke and Lord Donoughmore for opposing all interference with the powers which, contrary to law, the church of Rome exercises in Great Britain and Ireland, if good for their purpose, are infinitely stronger reasons for refusing to Roman Catholics that political power which is now sought for by them, and by others for them, and which no man can doubt, they would consider themselves (if true Catholics) conscientiously bound to use, and which their bishops, and priests, and especially their confessors, would continually urge them to use, for the destruction of the Protestant religion in Great Britain and Ireland; telling them, in the language of the priests at the late elections in Ireland, *that the salvation of their souls depended on the exertion of the powers given to them for the destruction of the Protestant church.* On this subject the mind of every Roman Catholic is under an influence which he may inwardly lament,

(as some probably do,) but which, as long as he remains a Roman Catholic, obedient to all the precepts of his church, he has not power to resist.

The agent in England for the Roman Catholics of Ireland, says, "that the objection of the Catholics to the admission of any right in the ministers of the crown to direct or control the appointment of their prelates are twofold—religious and political. They feel, as Catholics, that such an authority could not be conceded to men whose policy is irreconcilable with a due regard to the essential qualifications for such sacred offices; and they feel that, as citizens, and above all as Irish citizens, they would extend influence over the only class of society which has hitherto escaped the contamination to which he alludes."

In using this language this agent forgot, as all his adherents forget, that every objection which he thus suggests to any interference of the state with the Roman Catholic establishment in Ireland, extends, in a much stronger degree, to the admission of Roman Catholics to political power in Ireland or in Great Britain. Whilst he refuses the most simple negative to a Protestant, he solicits an affirmative for a Catholic. He thinks it perfectly right that a Roman Catholic prime minister should have the whole patronage of the crown in his hands, with respect to the Protestant churches, and with respect to every office of trust and power in the country by which the Protestant churches may be affected, but that a mere negative should not be allowed to a Protestant mi-

nister, to prevent an improper appointment in the Roman Catholic church. He asserts at the same time the right of the Roman Catholics to hold unrestrained correspondence with a foreign power; a power professedly hostile to the Protestant churches and Protestant government of Great Britain and Ireland, and conscientiously bound, and urged by interest, to seek the overthrow of both, and to establish in their places, an exclusive Roman Catholic church, and exclusive Roman Catholic government.

The boast of the Irish agent of the increased numbers of Roman Catholics both in Great Britain and Ireland, and their increased wealth and power, must, if true, tend to increase, rather than to diminish, the danger attending further concession; and his Protestant allies, who see no danger in granting to the Roman Catholics political power, would do well to refer to his statements of the number and importance of their establishments, their hierarchy, their monasteries, and their Jesuits.

In the political consideration of this question, it is important to observe the marked difference between the various congregations of Protestant Dissenters from the established Protestant churches, and the constitution of the Roman Catholic church, governing, with despotic power, all the Roman Catholics in Great Britain and Ireland, as a part of one vast, connected, and most powerful body, all the members of the Roman Catholic church throughout the world.

The dissenting congregations who are Protes-

tants, are so many distinct commonwealths; and so far productive of inconvenience, as dissent from any political establishment (and the established churches of England and Ireland, and of Scotland, are political as well as religious establishments, authorized and regulated by the laws of the state) must, in any country, produce some inconvenience. But the Protestant Dissenters acknowledge no foreign superior, no foreign authority. They in no way contradict the solemn assertion which the legislature of the united kingdom has, for the security of its own supremacy, thought fit to require from persons in various ways intrusted with power;

"That no *foreign* prince, person, prelate, state, or potentate, hath or ought to have any power, jurisdiction, superiority, pre-eminence, or authority, ecclesiastical or spiritual, within the realm."

To this the Protestant dissenting congregations yield a ready assent; it is part of their creed; and they are, therefore, the subjects of no foreign power.

They are voluntary associations, in which no person has any authority, except as confirmed by the free-will of the association. Their ministers for the purposes of religion, in those societies which have such ministers, are appointed according to the rules of the associations in which those ministers perform such duties: rules which may be varied, or annulled, according to the will of such associations respectively. The members of those associations, and their ministers, are therefore free from all obligations to any power, except the power

which those associations respectively may voluntarily attribute to the whole, or any parts or part, of their own respective associations. If any discord arises in any of these associations, producing important disagreement in doctrine or discipline, the dissentient minority may separate, and this has frequently happened, from the rest; and may form a new association, according with their own opinions.

Whilst, therefore, such associations observe the just purposes of their institutions, though their dissent from the established churches may be a subject of regret, yet, in the forms in which they now exist, they are not dangerous to the *Protestant government* of the country. The most considerable of those associations, on the contrary, seek the protection of the established government, and are anxious that it should remain, as constituted by law, Protestant.

The Roman Catholics, on the contrary, are of a character wholly distinct. They are parts of a great foreign association under a foreign head. By the authority of that foreign head, and under the government of that foreign head, they have a regular hierarchy, established according to rules prescribed to them by that foreign head, rules with which no individual dares to interfere; and they assert, in direct contradiction to the law of the land, that that foreign head "hath and ought to have, within this realm, power, jurisdiction, superiority, pre-eminence, and authority, both ecclesiastical and spiritual:" that this foreign authority is by divine right

supreme; and that all who refuse to submit to that authority are rebels against the declared will of God.

The Roman Catholic inhabitants of the British islands, therefore, are subjects of a foreign power, to whose authority they bow as divine authority; and they are, by their obedience to that foreign power, hostile to so much of the institutions of the British government as are adverse to the pretensions of that foreign power.

They are therefore adverse to a most important part of the British institutions; and to the freedom of those institutions from a foreign yoke. They are therefore so far declared enemies of the British government as established by law, and asserted and confirmed by the Revolution of 1688, and the laws settling the succession to the throne; and therefore the Roman Catholics of Ireland refused to take any oath which might be deemed to bind them to support the Protestant succession to the throne, and substituted an oath binding them to maintain the succession of a prince professing the Roman Catholic religion, in contradiction to the law of the land.

To that part of the British constitution which provides for the Protestant succession to the throne, the Roman Catholics of Ireland have therefore openly professed themselves disloyal; and the Roman Catholics of England who have neglected to take the oath which their leaders at one time proposed for them, have given reason to suspect that

they do not materially differ on this subject from the Irish Roman Catholics.

A very important difference in the character of the Protestant dissenter, and that of the Roman Catholic, arises from the uncontrolled power which the priesthood assumes over the Roman Catholic layman; a power to which no Protestant dissenter would submit. By the power of the priesthood the conscience of the Roman Catholic is taken out of his own custody; and, in whatever concerns his religion, he is not a free man. The priest determines for him what he ought to consider as concerning his religion. The priest would decide for him, that whatever tended to the advantage of the Protestant established churches he ought to resist, as contrary to his religious duties; that whatever might tend to the destruction of those churches, and of all religious opinions contrary to the doctrines of the church of Rome, or contrary to the subjection of all Christians to the absolute dominion of that church, he ought to promote; that therefore all political power which he might acquire, ought to be zealously and unceasingly employed in destroying all the heretical establishments of every description in Great Britain and Ireland, and restoring throughout the United Kingdom, the supreme and only dominion of the church of Rome. In what manner a person so conscientiously bound can faithfully discharge the duties of a British minister of state, a British legislator, or of any office of trust or power

under the British constitution, the most vehement advocate for Catholic emancipation has never attempted to suggest—because he cannot show that that is possible which is clearly impossible.

Religious opinions are generally impressed on the human mind by early education; and, thus impressed, they have usually a stronger hold on the mind than any other opinions. The strongest minds have rarely the power entirely to free themselves from the religious impressions made during their tender years. Those, therefore, who have been educated in the Roman Catholic religion, and taught from infancy to submit their minds wholly to the direction of a priest, are seldom able, in advanced years, wholly to throw off the yoke imposed upon them in childhood. From mere habit, the Roman Catholic submits to the power of his priest; and, subject to that power, he is not a freeman, and cannot be a fit guardian of that freedom from priestly power which is an essential part of the British institutions.

To render himself fit for such a charge, he must throw off the trammels in which priestly power has enveloped him from infancy. He must be brought to feel, that, according to the principles of the British constitution, all power is to be considered as subjected to, and placed under the control of, the constitutional rulers of the country, legislative and executive; and that a third power, the power of a priesthood independent of the su-

preme legislative and executive powers, is a power inconsistent with the principles of the British constitution. If the prejudices of early education render him incapable of embracing this fundamental principle of the British constitution, he is an unfit person to be entrusted with important legislative or executive power in the British government. Thus when the Revolution of 1688 had removed James the Second from the throne, and placed William and Mary in his stead, a person whose opinions compelled him to consider that Revolution as an unlawful act, and to conceive that James still remained his lawful king, and that William and Mary were usurpers of this right of James, could not be entrusted with important legislative or executive power under the new government. The exclusion of Roman Catholics from important political power is founded on the same principle. They hold, that there exists, by divine right, a priestly power, superior to the constituted powers legislative and executive of the country; and that to that priestly power they are, in conscience, bound to yield obedience in preference to the laws ordained by those constituted powers, in whatever that priestly power may assume a right to be supreme.

The conscience of a Roman Catholic is not in his own keeping; it is in the custody of others: and until he can free himself from this tyranny, he is not a freeman; and, not being a freeman, he is not a fit person to have the guardianship of a free constitution of government.

He is bound, by his religion, to seek the destruction of that free constitution which he is appointed to preserve; to destroy all the provisions which have been made for its protection; and to place that constitution under the absolute rule of the Roman Catholic church.

Will Protestants submit quietly to be thus deprived of their liberties, purchased with the blood of their forefathers; and will they not freely shed their own blood, to avoid the prevalence of such tyranny?

A bloody civil war must finally be the result of the measures proposed by His Majesty's ministers, should those measures be adopted by Parliament.

For what is the result of those measures?

The only security for the Protestant religion will then be the firmness of a Protestant king, who may be compelled, by the prevalence of Roman Catholic power in Parliament, to surround himself with Roman Catholic ministers, to fill every office with Roman Catholics, and to have no resource to protect himself from expulsion from the throne, but by submitting (as Henry the Fourth of France was compelled to do) to profess, however unwillingly, that religion, which according to the existing law would deprive him of his right to the throne.

Henry attempted to obtain protection for those Protestants who had been his principal supporters in his claim to the crown of France, by a solemn contract. That contract was first evaded, and then an-

nulled; the descendants of those Protestants were driven from their country; many of them took shelter in Great Britain and Ireland; and now, their descendants, (*openly denounced as objects of detestation in Ireland,*) are in danger of similar expulsion from these realms, and may be compelled to seek an asylum in some other country, if (considering the liberality of the times) they should be able to find any country free from the dominion of all-conquering Rome.

A bloody civil war may, and probably will, prevent so unfortunate a result. For such a war, those Protestants who are anxious to preserve their liberties must prepare their minds. The ministers of our Protestant king propose to throw the Protestant religion at the feet of its enemies, and from those enemies the Protestant religion can expect no mercy. They have denounced it as *a pestilent heresy,* which their religion compels them to sweep from the face of the earth.

Our best ground for hope is, that their religious zeal may urge them on so rapidly, as at length to alarm those who do not profess their religion, but have been misled, by what is called liberality, to assist in the destruction of the safe-guards of our Protestant constitution in church and state; and those who are now seeking to pull down those safe-guards, may be alarmed, and become anxious again to re-erect them, as the only means of preserving their own freedom.

Conciliation is now out of the question; it is not thought of by our ministers: *submission* is their word of war, and in *humble submission to Roman Catholic power,* they are preparing to lay our Protestant constitution (as the price of temporary forbearance, not of peace) at the feet of that power, irreconcileably hostile to whatever bears the name of Protestant.

The high pretensions of the Roman Catholic priesthood, have been thus asserted by a foreign prelate of that church, and adopted by a modern Irish historian, as the language of the Roman Catholic church in Ireland.

"The Catholic church speaks thus to her children:—Ye are a people, a state, a society; but Jesus Christ, who is your king, holds nothing from *you:* his authority is of a higher origin. You have no greater right to say *who shall be his ministers,* than you have to appoint *him* to be your sovereign. Thus *your pastors,* who are *his ministers, derive their title from the same source* that Christ himself does; and it is essential that they should be placed over you by an order of his appointment."

Such is the doctrine of the Church of Rome, and such the pretensions of the Roman Catholic clergy in Ireland, and in Great Britain also: a doctrine repugnant to that control by the civil government, which the British constitutions have always asserted, and extending to every religious establishment formed under the authority of the bishops of Rome;

a doctrine never acknowledged by the governments of the British islands, whilst their churches were in communion with the see of Rome; and, on the contrary, frequently resisted by those governments, who at various times assumed control inconsistent with that doctrine; a control necessary for the preservation of internal order, and for that freedom which has at all times been asserted by the people of Britain. But this unconstitutional doctrine is now openly asserted by the Roman Catholics of the United Kingdom, the laity as well as the clergy, in derogation of the rights of the constitutional, legislative and executive powers, in derogation of rights asserted in the times when Popery was most triumphant; and this unconstitutional doctrine has been submitted to by His Majesty's ministers, in the propositions which they have made to Parliament. They have submitted to claims to which neither the Parliament, nor the ministers of the crown, in those days, when the power of the church of Rome was the greatest, and its assumption of control most arrogant, would have submitted. The king's ministers have proposed to render the Roman Catholic religion, not only *an established* religion in the country, but an established religion not subject to any control whatsoever, except the foreign control of the bishop of Rome; the control of a power hostile to the established Protestant churches, and to all Protestant congregations dissenting from those established churches; and this foreign power is to be allowed to exercise his sove-

reignty in the British islands, more despotically than is allowed at this day by any government, in which the Roman Catholic religion is acknowledged as the established religion; more despotically than was *ever* allowed in France, and far more despotically than is *now* allowed in France; more despotically than is now allowed even in Spain, the most devoted subject of the Roman church.

If His Majesty's ministers had proposed to make the Roman Catholic religion the established religion of the United Kingdom, upon the same terms as the Roman Catholic religion is now the established religion in France, the proposition would have been more accordant with the principles of the British constitution, than the propositions which have been submitted to Parliament by His Majesty's ministers; and His Majesty's Protestant subjects would act more prudently in adopting the French ecclesiastical establishment, in communion with the church of Rome, subject to the control which the French constitution has imposed upon it, than in adopting the propositions of his Majesty's ministers; which, retaining *nominally* a Protestant establishment, *subject to constitutional control,* give to it a rival, authorized by law, but subject to *no control by law;* a rival establishment which must, therefore, being without restraint, eventually become *predominant,* (for power without restraint must always be predominant over power subject to restraint,) and render all the British people *slaves of the court of Rome;*

unless the exertions of true Protestants, throwing off the delusion of modern liberalism, should be able to resist effectually the attempts to reduce the people of Great Britain and Ireland to that slavery which the church of Rome would impose upon them, and upon all the world, if the governments of other countries were as submissive to Papal power as the British government will be if the proposed measures should be carried into execution.

Should the ministerial propositions, under the delusion of the moment, be adopted, the Protestants of every denomination may soon find the danger to which their religious freedom, and perhaps their civil freedom, may be exposed by the effect of those propositions, especially in Ireland. They may then rouse themselves again to active opposition to Papal tyranny; and by a new revolution, founded on the principles of 1688, rescue themselves from the oppression with which they are threatened; but they may be compelled to re-assert their freedom by the lamentable conflict of a bloody civil war: a war which the ministerial propositions render inevitable, unless the Protestants of the British islands shall tamely submit to the tyranny of the court of Rome.

But the exertions of Protestants for their redemption, to be effectual must be early; or their chains may be so rivetted that they may be unable to throw them off. The Protestants of Ireland will indeed have little chance of escape, whatever exer-

tion they may be disposed to make. They seem to be *doomed* to undergo the yoke of the church of Rome, or to fly from their country; which some of them have already in contemplation, considering that rejection of the ministerial propositions can alone produce their safety. This is no conjectural assertion; *it is the steady determination of prudent men.*

It has often been said, and experience tends to show that it has been truly said, that a government true to itself has never been overturned. Let those who are attached to our Protestant government beware of that delusion now termed liberality, which may lead to its destruction. Let the friends of government compel the government to be true to itself as a Protestant government; and its powers will be found sufficient for its protection. Those powers have not been, during many past years, exerted as they ought to have been: and if our free government should fall, it will fall because it will not have been true to itself.

Should the Roman Catholics of Ireland obtain that superiority which they expect to obtain, by admission to political power; should the Roman Catholic become the established church of Ireland, which will probably be the effect of the measures now proposed, what mercy can the Protestant clergy of Ireland expect from the Roman Catholic clergy?—from a clergy who have recently published, in Ireland, notes on their Douay Testament, in which

they have described "All Protestant clergy as thieves, murderers, and ministers of the devil; leaders of rebellion against the lawful authority of the Catholic priests; engaged in a damnable revolt against the priests of God's church;" with many other similar incentives to the Catholic population to effect the destruction of the Protestant clergy.

Is this the spirit of conciliation? and have the Protestant clergy of Ireland no ground for apprehension of that destruction with which the authorized bible of the Irish Roman Catholic church has thus threatened them?

Can it be matter of surprise, that the Protestant clergy of various denominations in Great Britain, should also feel some alarm, and demonstrate that alarm by their petitions to Parliament. The strong arm of Protestants in Great Britain, if timely raised, may protect them; but the Protestant clergy in Ireland can expect no mercy. They are devoted to destruction by the triumphant hierarchy of the church of Rome.

THE END.

LONDON:
IBOTSON AND PALMER, PRINTERS, SAVOY STREET, STRAND.

HANDBOUND
AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO PRESS